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DAIRY CLUB MANUAL

FOR

4-H CLUB MEMBERS

PRIZE-WINNING CLUB CALVES

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DAIRY CALF CLUB MANUAL

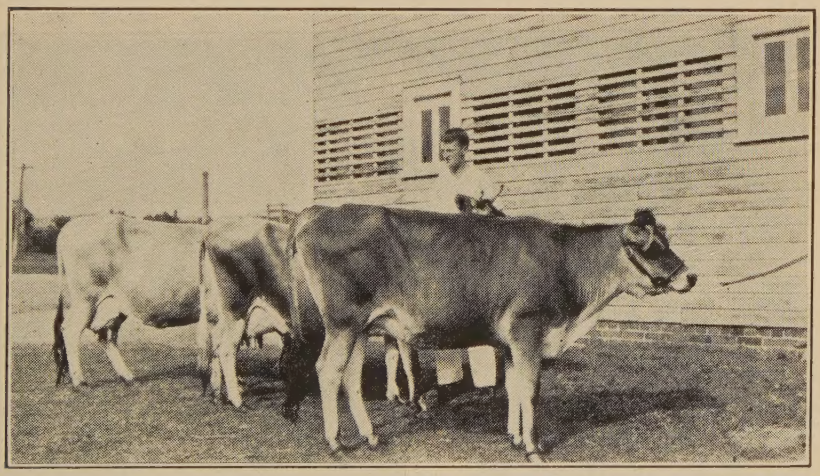
FOR

4-H CLUB MEMBERS

By A. C. KIMREY, *Extension Dairyman*

INTRODUCTION

In view of the increased interest in dairying and the constantly growing demand for better dairy cattle as well as more dairy products on the part of North Carolina folks, there is no reason why the 4-H Club boy or girl should not prepare to share the returns from such demands. Good dairy cattle always bring a fair price and their product can be profitably sold at all times.



WITH BOYS' HELP THEY GROW INTO MONEY

OBJECTS

1. To demonstrate to boys and girls the desirability of a dairy industry and the profits therefrom.

2. To encourage better care and management of dairy young stock on farms where dairying is already a part of the farm business.

3. To teach correct methods of record keeping on the farm, especially as to cost of raising dairy cattle and the returns to be derived from them.

4. To encourage the breeding of better dairy cattle on the farms of North Carolina.

5. To interest boys and girls in farm life through a profitable system of dairy husbandry.

GIVING THE CALF A PROPER START

Much of the loss in calves occurs before they are ten days old. If proper care is taken during this period the calf is well on the way to a normal cow life. The calf should be left with its mother twenty-four to forty-eight hours in order that it may get the first or colostrum milk, which acts as a mild purgative. If for any reason this first milk is not available for the calf it should be fed by the time it is twelve hours old a quart of whole milk from as fresh a cow as possible. All milk fed to young calves should be at a temperature of 98 degrees as near as possible.

TEACHING CALF TO DRINK

When the calf is about forty-eight hours old it should be separated from its mother and placed in a dry, light, warm, clean and well-bedded stall. It should be left alone for at least twelve hours, or until it becomes hungry. When the calf has become hungry, take a quart of whole milk at the proper temperature (98°) and try to teach it to drink. This is done by backing the calf into a corner, stradling its neck and placing two fingers

TEACHING THE CALF TO DRINK

into its mouth. When it begins to suck the fingers force its mouth down into the milk and allow it to draw milk from the bucket with the fingers somewhat separated remaining in its mouth. Repeat this feeding process two or three times each day, allowing the calf about a quart of milk at each feed. As quickly as possible train the calf to drink without your fingers in its mouth. This can be done by gradually removing the fingers, keeping its mouth forced down into the milk.

Always feed the calf milk out of a bucket that you would be willing to drink from, as cleanliness and warm milk will largely prevent scours in young calves.

If the calf seems to be doing well, increase the milk each week about one pound (a pint) at a feed until the calf is three weeks old at which time skimmilk may be gradually substituted for whole milk. Replace the whole milk with skimmilk at the rate of one-half pound (one-half pint) at each feed until all the whole milk has been replaced. It will require 8 to 10 days to complete the substitution. Be sure that all foam is removed from the skimmilk before it is fed to the calf. Do not increase the total amount of milk fed during the period when substitution is being made nor for a week thereafter.

After the calf is completely shifted to skimmilk and seems to be doing well and shows no sign of scours, the amount of skimmilk may be gradually increased to fifteen to twenty pounds per day, or four to five quarts at each feed. Unless it is an unusually large calf for its age never feed more than five quarts of milk at a feed at any age.

FEEDING SCHEDULE SUMMARY

First Week: Leave the calf with its mother for two days after which remove and feed it about two pounds of warm whole milk at a feed two or three times each day.

Second Week: Continue whole milk feeding at the rate of about 2½ pounds at each feed. At this time place some of the following grain mixture before the calf and allow it to eat all it will until it is around a month old:

3 parts cracked corn
1 part ground oats
1 part wheat bran

Place some clean mixed or grass hay in a low rack and keep it constantly before the calf.

Third Week: Continue whole milk feeding at the rate of about three pounds at each feed or slightly more if calf is vigorous. Continue grain and hay feeding as above and allow free access to water (of medium temperature), except just after milk is fed, at which time calves will usually drink more than they should.

Fourth Week: Continue milk feeding at the rate of about four pounds (2 quarts) at each feed and begin to substitute skimmilk for whole milk at the rate of one-half pound (one-half pint) at each feeding until whole milk is all replaced.

Continue grain and hay feeding as above. Allow free access to water of medium temperature, except just after milk is fed.

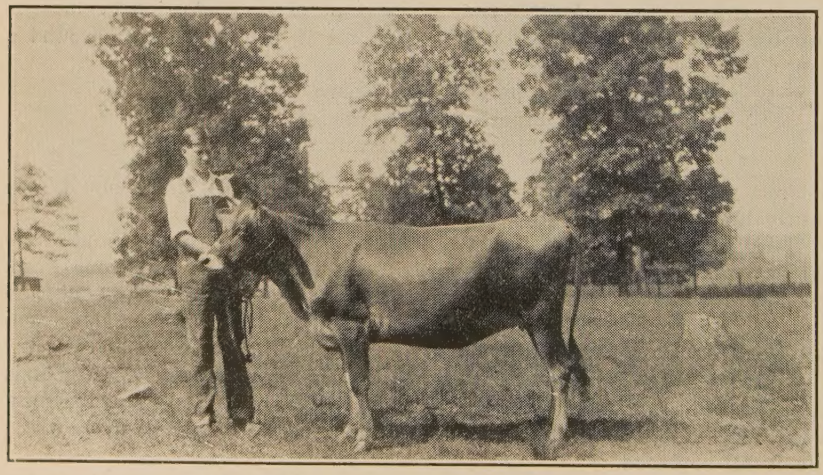
Fifth Week and Thereafter to Six Months of Age: Continue skimmilk, feeding gradually increasing the amount up to fifteen to twenty pounds per day (four to five quarts at each feed).

Continue grain feeding as above, but do not allow the calf free access to grain after it is a month old. At this age the calf should be eating about one pound of grain each day and this amount should be gradually increased until at six months of age it should be eating around three pounds of grain each day. Allow calf all the good clean mixed hay it will eat. Allow free access to water of medium temperature except just after milk is fed.

Six Months to Maturity: When the calf is around six months old discontinue the feeding of skimmilk gradually, a week or ten days being taken for this purpose. The quantities of grain and hay should be gradually increased to take the place of the skimmilk and should be fed in sufficient amounts to maintain normal growth, but not in sufficient amounts to make the heifers over fat. It is not a good policy to over fatten the heifer. In the spring when the heifer is turned on pasture, continue feeding some grain until the pasture becomes plentiful. At any time when pasture is not good the heifer should have some grain and hay (silage if available). Well-cured legume hay is best for calves of this age. During this period the heifers should have all the good pasture they can make use of during the summer and all the good legume hay and silage they will eat during the winter months supplemented with sufficient grain to produce normal growth.

WHEN TO BREED

Heifers should be bred when from fifteen to twenty months old, depending somewhat on the size of the individual heifer. When possible, breeding should take place in December or January in order that they will freshen in the early fall.



HEIFER OF BREEDING AGE WITH SUFFICIENT GROWTH

SHOWING

Showing should be a real part of the calf club work for the year. It gives the club member an opportunity to find out how his heifer compares with those of the other members as to type, condition, training and development.

It is usually advisable for the club member to show his calf in the open classes at the fair as well as in the club classes. In the open classes competition is keener and the experience gained from showing against

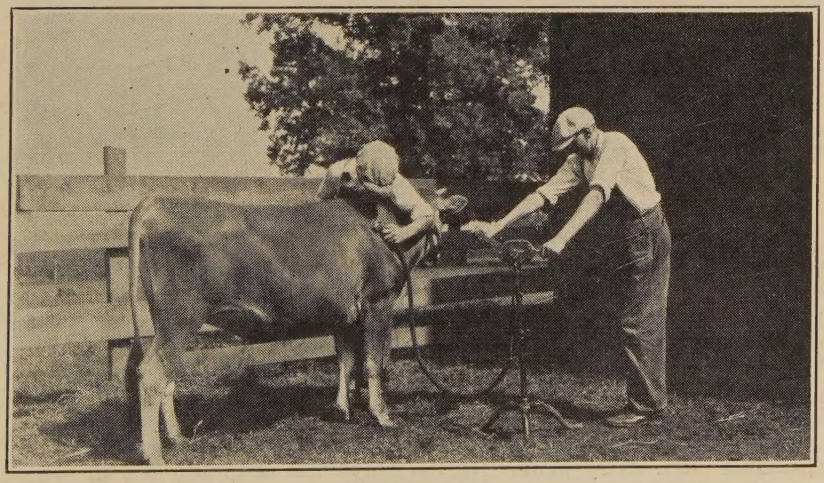
high-class animals exhibited by expert showmen will prove of great help to the club member in his future efforts at showing.

HEIFER BEFORE AND AFTER FITTING

FITTING FOR SHOW

Assuming that the heifer is in good growing order, eight weeks of active fitting will put her in good show condition. The following grain mixture constitutes a good fitting ration:

30 lbs. ground corn	30 lbs. wheat bran
30 lbs. ground oats	20 lbs. linseed meal



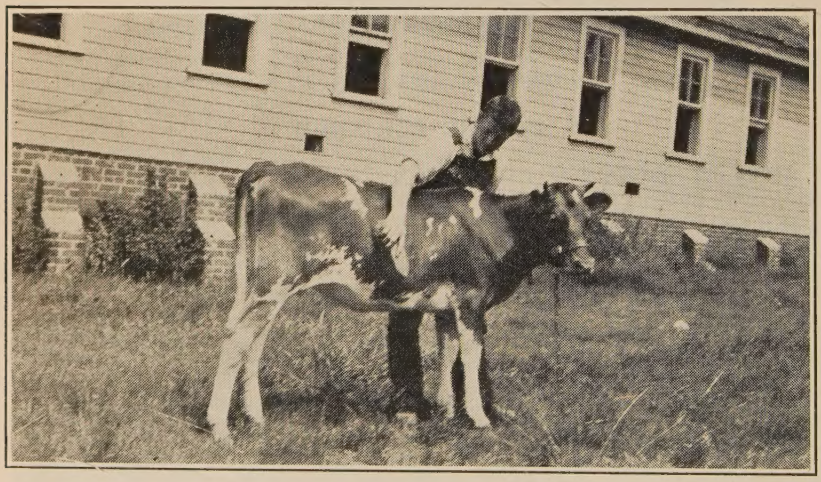
CLIPPING

During the fitting period feed plenty of good mixed hay. The amount of grain to be fed should be governed by the general condition of the animal. Feed sufficient to get the calf reasonably fat, care being taken not

to over-fatten. If any digestive trouble appears reduce the amount of feed immediately.

Cleaning, Clipping and Blanketing—Unless the hair of the calf is short and sleek, clip it all over six to eight weeks before show time. If the hair is short and sleek, all over clipping may not be necessary, but just such clipping from time to time as may be necessary to keep the coat at proper length. In either case give the calf a thorough washing with soap and water, using a good tar soap. The soap should be thoroughly rinsed out, and the animal dried under a blanket. Burlap bags sewed together will make suitable blankets for the fitting period but a ready-made blanket should be purchased to use at all shows.

The animal should be blanketed constantly from the time fitting begins until show time. This keeps the animal clean, causes it to develop a fine glossy coat and gives the skin a thin mellow texture.



BRUSHING ANIMAL

Each morning the heifer should be thoroughly groomed with a fine bristled brush, followed by a good rubbing with a woolen cloth and this followed by a good rubbing with the bare hands, always rubbing the way the hair lies. Any manure stains should be washed off with clean water to which has been added a few drops of blueing.

Keep the animal being fitted in a clean, cool stable during the heat of the day.

Attention to Hoofs and Horns—Neat, shapely horns add greatly to the appearance of a dairy heifer. If the horns are naturally out of shape, gradually bring them into proper shape with horn trainers.

In trimming horns, first scrape the rough parts off with a piece of broken glass or rasp. After this use sandpaper and emery cloth. A few days before the show, begin polishing the horns daily, using strips of flannel cloth, apply a small amount of pumice stone and sweet oil, letting

the final polish be made with a strip of clean flannel cloth, see-sawed around the horns from three to five minutes. The final polish should be on show day.

If the hoofs are long and unshapely they should be trimed. Clean and polish the hoofs, especially just before showing.

Keep the head, tail and belly closely clipped during the entire fitting period. This will add greatly to the appearance of the calf.

DRESSING HORNS

Handling—It is very necessary that the heifer be carefully trained to lead and stand as placed. This can only be done by long and careful training. Lead the heifer each day, also train her to lead among other cattle and notice them as little as possible.

Do not use a broad leather halter, but rather the regulation round roll leather halter. The kind of a halter materially affects the appearance of the heifer, when she is being shown.

There is plenty to do the day before showing. See that the heifer is well-bedded and all precautions taken to keep her clean. The horns may need some attention, but leave the final polish until the morning of show day.

Wash the switch out with soap water and braid it into three tight braids of even size; work a string into each braid, so that the braid can be tied at the end.

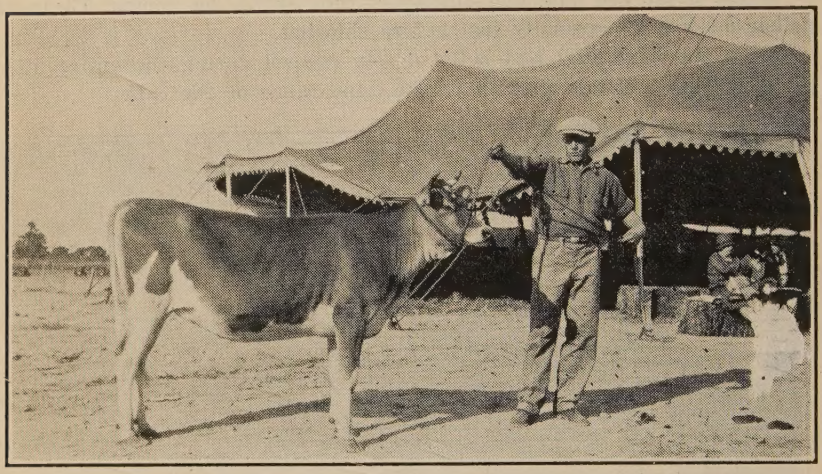
Do not give the calf all the water it wants the evening before the show.

SHOW DAY

Find out the time when showing begins and give yourself ample time to "dress up" yourself and your calf. Clean her thoroughly and comb out the switch, give the horns and hoofs a final polishing. Water the calf just

before showing, but do not allow her to drink an unreasonable amount of water, as she may then appear somewhat bloated.

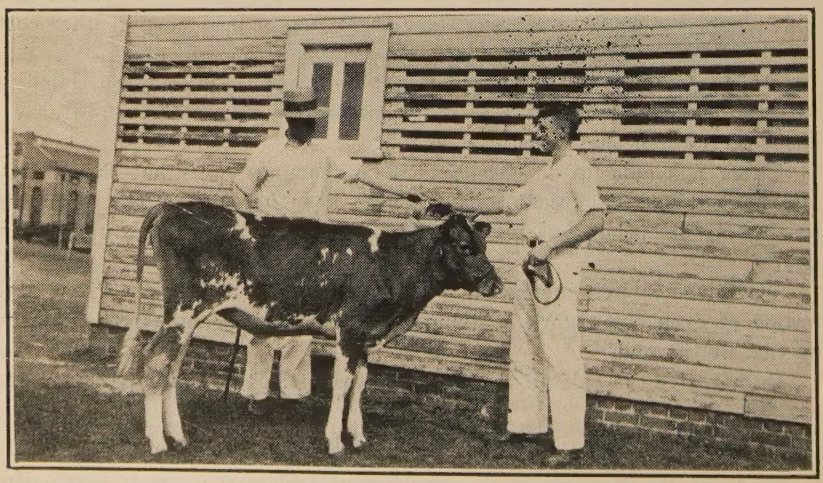
Remember that you as well as your calf should be clean and neat.



SHOWING HEIFER

SPORTSMANSHIP

Never question, in the show ring, the decision of the judge, as to where the animals are placed and never deride your fellow showman if his animal happens to be placed below yours, but rather congratulate the winner—this is good sportsmanship.



THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS THE BLUE RIBBON. THIS CAN BE ASSURED THROUGH GOOD SELECTION, PROPER FEEDING, GROOMING, FITTING AND TRAINING.